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MORRIS JASTROW, JR.

(Read, December 2, 1921.)

The life of Professor Morris Jastrow was that of a highly distinguished Semitic scholar, who was successfully a teacher, investigator, decipherer, writer, editor, and publicist. His life was peculiarly consecrated to a search for knowledge and the promulgation of the truths that he had ascertained.

In the preparation for the work of his life he had in his youth the advantage of a favorable environment. His father, Rabbi Marcus Jastrow, was in charge of a German congregation in Warsaw, when on August 13, 1861, Morris first saw the light of day. A few years later, after having been subjected to arrest because of his political opinions bearing upon the liberties of the people, his father was obliged to leave the country, and came to Philadelphia, where in 1866 he was called to the Congregation Rodef Shalom, which he served for many years and of which he was rabbi emeritus at the time of his death, in 1903. He was a distinguished preacher, a godly man, and a profound scholar. The great literary heritage that he left is his Talmudic Dictionary, a monument of untiring industry and wide scholarship.

After Morris Jastrow had graduated from the University of Pennsylvania, in 1881, he studied at Breslau under Frankel, Graetz, and Rosin; at Leipzig under Fleischer and Franz and Frederick Delitzsch; at Strassburg under Noeldeke; and in Paris under Renan, Oppert, Derenbourgs, and Halevy. In 1884 he received his Ph.D. at Leipzig, writing his dissertation on the unpublished grammatical works of a Jewish Arabic Grammarian. In 1914 his alma mater honored him by conferring upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws.

Jastrow had studied for the ministry, and for a short time had been his father's assistant; but preferring scholastic work to being an exponent of the Jewish faith, he became Lecturer in Semitics at the University of Pennsylvania in 1887; and in 1891 he became Professor of Semitic Languages and Literature. In 1888 he became Assistant Librarian of the University, and a decade later Librarian, which office he held until 1919, making in all thirty-one years of

service in this capacity. During his incumbency the library was re-catalogued and was nearly trebled in size. He was Haskell Lecturer at Oberlin College for 1913. He lectured during the summer sessions of 1919 and 1920 at the University of California. For the present year, having been granted sabbatical leave from the University, he had been chosen Annual Professor of the American School of Oriental Research at Jerusalem; and had been asked to go also to Baghdad to complete arrangements for the establishment of a similar school in that city.

In 1886 Professor Jastrow was elected a member of the American Oriental Society; and for thirty-five years, until his death, he took a very active part in its work, contributing many notable articles to its *Journal*. For many years he was one of the Directors of the Society, and held that position at the time of his death. He was chosen Vice-President of the Society for 1912-13, and President for 1914-15. Since 1891 he was a member of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis, and made frequent contributions to its *Journal*. In 1916 he was President of this Society; and served on its Board of Directors many years. He was a founder of the Philadelphia Oriental Club, in 1888; and for many years had been its leading spirit.

In 1897 he was elected a member of the American Philosophical Society, and served as Secretary from 1904-1908, and as Councillor from 1910-12, 1914-16, 1920-21. He served twice on the Library Committee, and at the time of his death he was a member of it, as well as a Councillor of the Society. He was always a very active supporter of the measures which at various times during his membership were brought forward to promote the activity and usefulness of the Society. He was always deeply interested in its welfare, and gave time to it unstintingly.

Professor Jastrow was appointed the official United States delegate to the last three Oriental Congresses, held at Rome, Copenhagen, and Athens. He was also the official delegate to the Third and Fourth International Congresses for the History of Religion, held at Oxford and Leyden. At the former he was elected President of the Semitic Section, and he was one of the presidents at the latter.

He read occasional papers before the Archæological Institute of America; and he was also a member of the Board of Editors of Art and Archæology, published under the auspices of that Society. For years he was a member of the Executive Committee of the Managing Committee of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem, and was also a member of the Committee on the Mesopotamian School. He took part last spring in the work of incorporating the schools, which proved one of his last acts for the advancement of Oriental research. He was regarded a valued and representative member of the Shakespeare Society of Philadelphia; and also took an active part in the Contemporary Club, the Pennsylvania Library Club, and the Franklin Inn Club of Philadelphia.

By the fruitfulness of his investigations and his manifold contributions Jastrow has indelibly impressed his name upon Oriental research. His first contribution to Semitics was his dissertation on the grammatical treatise of Abu Zakarijjâ Jahâ ben Dawûd Hajjûg, which was published in 1885. In his large bibliography, besides this work four other contributions in Arabic are found. While Arabic never ceased to be attractive to him, and he had even planned to be in Egypt at this time for the express purpose of devoting himself to modern Arabic, he early appreciated the fact that for the Biblical field, in which he was especially interested, greater opportunities for research were to be found in the study of Assyrian, Hebrew, and Aramaic.

Jastrow's first contribution in Assyrian was in 1887, on a "Passage in the Cylinder Inscription of Asurbanapal," which was published in the *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*. His bibliography shows that following this, scarcely a year passed in which one to seven articles were not published on Assyriological subjects alone. In 1889 he published an important fragment of an inscribed cylinder of a ruler named Marduk-shapiq-zirim. By a process of elimination and conjecture and on palæontological grounds he not only determined that this ruler belonged to the Nisin or Pashe dynasty, but in a remarkable manner reasoned that he should be restored to his place as the founder of the dynasty. An inscription in the Yale Collection published thirty years later proved this to be correct.

Another early notable contribution in Assyriology was a fragment of the Irra Myth published in the University of Pennsylvania Series in Philology. This was followed by the publication of a fragment of the Etana Legend from the Library of Ashurbanapal, which had found its way into private hands. It was his good fortune to discover also in private hands a second fragment of this important epic, which he published in 1909. His translation and interpretation of these inscriptions, as well as several others, and in particular a large and important "Assyrian Medical Tablet in the possession of the College of Physicians," Philadelphia, fully demonstrated his ability to handle original inscriptions in a masterly manner.

Jastrow was early attracted to the study of the religion of Babylonia and Assyria. He was the founder and secretary until his death of the Committee of American Lectures on the History of Religion, and published one of its monographs. He was the editor of a *Series of Handbooks on the History of Religions*; and was the author of "Religion of Babylonia and Assyria," which appeared in 1898, as the second volume in the series. This work of 780 pages was a most ambitious undertaking, being largely pioneer in character; but it was carried out so successfully that it remained the chief treatise upon the subject until it was supplanted by his larger work, "Die Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens," which appeared in seventeen parts between the years 1903 and 1913. It was originally intended that this work should be a translation into German of his English treatise; but while engaged upon its revision he not only kept pace with new discoveries, but he was prompted to make a fuller study of the divination texts than had previously been made, with the result that his work grew to such proportions that three large volumes, comprising over 1,700 pages of closely printed text, were required for the presentation of his researches. In this field of investigation Jastrow achieved his greatest results. By his linguistic work and interpretation, light was thrown upon hundreds of hitherto obscure words and passages in the omen texts, many of which he translated for the first time. In this field he had the opportunity of utilizing his wide range of knowledge, and showing his bent of mind by correlating in a remarkable manner the customs of other peoples.

These investigations led to one interesting discovery after another, resulting in many contributions being made to our journals on the subject of hepatoscopy or liver divination, and astrology, in Babylonia and Assyria. Only those who have worked in cognate fields can appreciate the amazing industry that such a monumental and herculean effort required. There can be no question but that Jastrow made himself the leading authority in the world on the religion of the Babylonians and Assyrians.

In 1911 he published "Aspects of Religious Beliefs and Practices in Babylonia and Assyria," which were the "American Lectures on the History of Religion," delivered at various institutions. In this work he summarized his investigations bearing upon the subject in a popular and readable form.

In 1915 Jastrow published a noteworthy volume, beautifully illustrated, on "The Civilization of the Babylonians and Assyrians," which is a survey of the entire subject on a larger scale for English readers than had previously been attempted. The work exhibits the comprehensive knowledge of the subject which the author possessed.

In his "Religion of the Babylonians and Assyrians" his presentation of the Gilgamesh Epic was distinctly an advance upon anything on the subject at that time. One of his latest contributions to Assyriology is entitled "An Old Babylonian Version of the Gilgamesh Epic," in the production of which the present writer, as joint author, took a minor part. It is a source of no little gratification to him to have been thus identified with the work of his lamented teacher, colleague and friend.

Jastrow's contributions in the subject of Hebrew and the Old Testament are also numerous. One of his early noteworthy papers in this field is entitled "Hebrew Proper Names Compounded with Yah and Yahu." Later researches show that in this work he had a remarkable appreciation of Semitic nomenclature. Article after article appeared in the Old Testament field, based upon a new interpretation of the text, or a comparative study of Semitic beliefs, practices, and modes of thought; these researches culminated in a valuable volume entitled "Hebrew and Babylonian Traditions," being the Haskell Lectures, delivered at Oberlin College, in 1913.

For years Jastrow has been studying and lecturing upon certain books of the Old Testament. Only two years ago he began to publish the results of his researches in this field, and there appeared a volume entitled "A Gentle Cynic, Being the Book of Ecclesiastes." This was closely followed last year by "The Book of Job"; and there has just appeared the "Song of Songs," the manuscript of which was practically completed only a few days before his death. His years of ripened scholarship, his new translation, and his sane interpretation of the text have enabled him to produce treatises on these books which will hereafter command serious attention whenever they are considered.

During the war Jastrow's interest was directed to the great political questions before the world, especially in their bearing upon the countries of the Near East. This was natural, especially for one who had devoted his life to a study of the history, religions, and archæology of the ancient peoples of these lands. He realized that the political problems of the present are in many respects similar to those of the past; and at the solicitation of those who had heard him lecture on the subject, he felt constrained to publish his views, which show a remarkable understanding of the situation. Four books followed one after the other in rapid succession, namely: "The War and the Bagdad Railway, or The Story of Asia Minor and its Relation to the Great Conflict"; "The War and the Coming Peace, a discussion of the war and the basis for an enduring peace"; "Zionism and the Future of Palestine"; and "The Eastern Question and its Solution." In these the Semitic scholar as publicist has presented a sane and practical solution of the problems involved.

Jastrow's miscellaneous bibliography is also large and full, including memoirs of important men and topics. He edited, with an introductory memoir, "Selected Essays of James Darmesteter," the translation of which from the French was made by Mrs. Jastrow. His contributions to encyclopædias and dictionaries are numerous; and besides being editor of the Handbooks of the History of Religion, he was editor of the Department of the Bible in the Jewish Encyclopædia; he was in charge of the Semitic articles in the International Encyclopædia; and joint-editor of the Semitic Study Series; Asso-

ciate Editor of the *American Journal of Semitic Languages*; and of the *American Journal of Theology*.

Jastrow's versatility and lucidity of style, which enabled him to present his results in a clear, definite, and logical form, was one of his rare gifts. He had a remarkable facility in composition, which enabled him to present results, accruing from his researches, with great ease. The comprehensive bearing of the subject he presented, and the suggestive summaries, which concluded most of his papers, were always highly appreciated.

No matter how brief a sketch of this savant's work is presented, reference cannot be omitted to his helpmeet, Helen Bachman Jastrow, his companion in all his literary work and activities. It is only necessary to read the prefaces to most of his books to see how generously he acknowledged his indebtedness and the "conscientious devotion" of her, whom he called his "faithful collaborator," his "severest and most sympathetic critic," who in numerous ways assisted him in all his work and problems, and who was, as he expressed himself in one of his prefaces, "a help and a source of strength too great to be expressed in words."

Jastrow's erudition, his ability to present knowledge in a clear and concise form, his abounding interest in students, and the steady enthusiasm he always manifested in their work, made him a very successful teacher. There was nothing of that overbearing attitude of the teacher who happens to know a little more than his student. Even to those who faltered or failed, after an honest endeavor, he was kind and encouraging. Invariably he showed a generous attitude towards the young scholar, and by kindly and helpful criticism stimulated him to press on and bring out the best that was in him. When the student was able to produce, he not only inspired him to do so, but he rejoiced over his production, and assisted in its publication. He seemed as much pleased when his students made a discovery as if he had made it himself.

But it was not only the student who received recognition for what he had accomplished; it was one of Jastrow's sterling qualities to recognize unselfishly and generously the scientific achievements of his colleagues. And this has meant so much to men pursuing in-

vestigations in certain recondite fields of Biblical and Semitic research with very few about to appreciate intelligently their results. Jastrow will be greatly missed by them.

It would be difficult to find one whose interests were more varied and widespread. He seemed to take cognizance of everything worth while. An outstanding characteristic was his invariable desire to advance his knowledge, which he loved solely for its own sake. He welcomed suggestions from any one able to furnish them; he even showed a willingness to learn from his students. This keenness for the absorption of knowledge resulted in giving him a breadth of horizon that constantly amazed his colleagues.

But what was still more amazing to his friends and colleagues was his marvellous industry. It was difficult to understand how he found time for all his various activities and interests; for besides being at the head of a great university library, teaching many classes, and conducting seminars with graduate students and colleagues, he poured out one publication after another. And yet with it all, he found time to enjoy the delights of society and all the pleasant things of life. His coteries of friends were many, and his home was a meeting place for men and women of letters. These enjoyed his society and he enjoyed theirs; for besides his mental alertness, his penetrating mind, and his rich appreciation of everything human, he was not only genially accessible, but he had a delightful personality which was always the same. Whenever he was present one could expect to enjoy a bright and animated conversation or discussion.

At the meeting of the learned society or club, as has so frequently been said by those who attended, Jastrow had usually something important to contribute, whether in a formal paper or in the discussion of the papers that were read by others. He was frequently the very life of the meeting. When he differed with the views of others he usually expressed his opposition, although without compromise, in such a palatable form that only the supersensitive would take offense. In Biblical criticism, although his investigations led him to take a position that was considered by the conservative as advanced, his views, due to the way he expressed them, did not seem to arouse as much antagonism as others less advanced. Moreover, it cannot be

said that he did not present the truth as he saw it; and he always had the courage to express his convictions. When any movement for the advancement of science was considered, Jastrow was either one of the promoters or he was one who could be counted upon to help further it. He was ready to give his time for anything worth while. His counsel and his coöperation were constantly sought; and he did not treat an appointment lightly. He performed his duties with an enthusiasm such that the cause for which he labored was usually advanced. It is generally felt that he will not only be greatly missed in the councils of these societies, but that, at least in some of them, there is no one to take his place.

By the death of Professor Jastrow America has lost one of her distinguished scholars; for in the humanities, few, if any, were better known in Europe. Orientalists in this country have lost their leading spirit. His fellow workers feel that they have sustained an irreparable loss. His wise counsel, his unwavering fidelity and loyalty for his friends, his kindly interest in their doings, his tender consideration and confidence, his unselfish character, his genial and delightful companionship—these are no more. Many feel that a great vacancy has come to exist in their lives, and that a living force has gone out of them.

The end of his career suddenly came on June 22, 1921, when it seemed that his potentiality was still on the ascendancy. No one can surmise what his remarkable capabilities would have enabled him to accomplish in another decade of activity.

ALBERT T. CLAY.

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ALBERT T. CLAY AND JAMES A. MONTGOMERY.*

ABBREVIATIONS.

AJSL, American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature.—*BA*, Beiträge zur Assyriologie.—*Bib. W.*, Biblical World.—*Hebr.*, Hebraica.—*Ind.*, Independent.—*JAOS*, Journal of the American Oriental Society.—*JBL*, Journal of Biblical Literature.—*JQR*, Jewish Quarterly Review.—*PAOS*, Proceed-

* In March, 1910, in commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Professor Jastrow's membership in the Faculty of the University of Penn-

ings of the American Oriental Society.—*S. S. Times*, Sunday School Times.
—*ZA*, Zeitschrift für Assyriologie.—*ZATW*, Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft.

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sylvania, the compilers published the bibliography of their preceptor, colleague and friend. It is with affectionate devotion to his memory, that they reprint that work and add the scientific and literary publications of the last eleven years of Dr. Jastrow's life. We express our obligations to Dr. E. Chiera of the University of Pennsylvania and Miss Kathrine B. Hagy of the University Library, for their valuable assistance in this compilation.

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Editor in conjunction with Prof. Gottheil of the "Semitic Study Series."

Editor of the Dept. of the Bible in the *Jewish Encyclopædia*, Vols. I. and II.

Editor in charge of the Semitic Dept. of the *International Encyclopædia*
(several hundred articles).

Associate Editor of the *American Journal of Semitic Languages*.

Associate Editor of the *American Journal of Theology*.

(j) UNPUBLISHED BOOKS AND PAPERS.

Priest, Prophet and Rabbi. University of California Lectures.

The Ancient and the Modern East. (East and West; Greece as the Link
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(It is hoped that many of these compositions may be published.)